



CEDEFOP



European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

CEDEFOP: Reference Centre
for a 'Europe of Knowledge'

**Operational
guidelines
and
medium-term
priorities
2000-2003**

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Cedefop: Operational guidelines and medium-term priorities 2000-2003

approved at the meeting of the Management Board of 23 and 24 November 1999

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The Centre was established by Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of the European Communities, last amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 251/95 of 6 February 1995 and Council Regulation (EC) No 354/95 of 20 February 1995.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

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Considering:

- the founding Regulation of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Regulation No 337/75 of the Council of 10 February 1975 - OJ L 39, 13 February 1975) establishing its main aim, tasks and services;
- the relevant provisions in the Treaty of Amsterdam and in particular the requirement to contribute to training of quality and to support and supplement actions of the Member States in vocational training policy;

- the Council decision establishing the second phase of the European Community vocational training action programme 'Leonardo da Vinci', and in particular provisions concerning the implementation of the programme and its consistency and complementarity with other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions, such as employment, education, research, technological development and innovation;
 - the implementation of the first set of policy guidelines and medium-term priorities (1997-2000) of the Centre;
 - the European Commission's 'Agenda 2000' and its priority to the development of knowledge and modernisation of employment systems;
 - activities of the European social partners in the vocational education and training field;
 - community policy initiatives in the field of vocational education and training, and establishment of a structured and continuous agenda with the presidencies;
- the Management Board has taken the following decision at its meeting on 23 and 24 November 1999 in Thessaloniki:

Introduction

1. These operational guidelines and medium-term priorities set the framework for Cedefop's activities for 2000-03. They will contribute to the Community's determination to promote the highest possible level of knowledge for its people and enable Cedefop to assist the European Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational education and training. They will also develop further Cedefop's role as the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training. They set out the products and services Cedefop will provide for its partners and clients and the thematic priorities upon which its work will focus in the coming period.

Cedefop's role

2. Cedefop is an active information provider and source of reference for information on vocational education and training systems and policies generally. It also carries out scientific analyses and overviews of research results, innovation and other developments.
3. Cedefop promotes mutual learning and understanding of key issues by examining developments and explaining and interpreting them. By facilitating exchanges, cooperation and synergy between all concerned, it seeks to develop a concerted European approach to vocational education and training problems.

Serving its partners

4. Through its products and services Cedefop contributes to a training of quality by serving the following wide and diverse audience:
 - European Commission, European Parliament and other European institutions;
 - Member States;
 - social partners;
 - other policy-makers, including local and regional authorities;

- vocational education and training researchers and practitioners;
- associated countries (Iceland and Norway) and, as soon as agreements have been concluded with Cedefop, EU applicant countries.

Main tasks

5. The guidelines and medium-term priorities are in line with the main tasks of Cedefop as defined in its founding Regulation:
 - to compile selected documentation and analysis of data;
 - to contribute to the development and coordination of research;
 - to exploit and disseminate useful information;
 - to encourage and support a concerted approach to vocational training problems;
 - to provide a forum for all concerned.
6. Cedefop will contribute to and capitalise upon information developed in:
 - European Community training programmes, and in particular the Leonardo da Vinci programme, where it has a specific role in implementing certain measures;
 - the European employment strategy - and its four pillars: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, and equal opportunities relating to vocational education and training;
 - other European programmes which include vocational education and training, in particular the fifth framework programme for research;
 - other research and initiatives carried out in Member States or by the social partners.

Policy guidelines for the annual work programme

7. Cedefop's work programme will set out activities based on the services it provides and the thematic medium-term priorities upon which it will focus. Cedefop will develop an annual work programme (as required by Cedefop's founding Regulation) in the perspective of these medium-term priorities and as a contribution to the success of the emerging 'rolling agenda' in the European Union. The programmes will emphasise the role of Cedefop as the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training.

Services

8. To fulfil its roles as an active information provider and as a source of reference, Cedefop will provide the following four services:

■ Information on vocational education and training

This will consist of:

- published descriptions of Member States' systems and arrangements;
- regular reports and periodicals on trends and developments;
- analysis of statistical data on vocational education and training;
- access to databases through the Electronic Training Village and Cedefop's library and documentation service.

■ Promoting and interpreting research and the identification of innovation

This will consist of:

- identifying the priorities for stimulating, coordinating and promoting research (especially the promotion of comparative and transnational research) and 'coaching' transnational partnerships;
- cooperation with international organisations;
- reports providing overviews and scientific analyses of outcomes of research under European programmes and on issues included in Cedefop's thematic priorities;
- reports and information on innovation and good practice.

■ Support to meet the specific needs of Cedefop's partners

This will consist of:

- reports or papers as requested on specific issues for senior-level decision-makers;
- responses to specific questions from Cedefop's partners;
- a 'consultancy' function in the context of Cedefop's mandate to provide information, advice or propose solutions to problems;
- at the request of the social partners, assistance for the social dialogue on vocational education and training issues.

■ Providing forums for debate and links between policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners

These will include:

- study visits' programme, 'Agora' Thessaloniki, 'European forum on transparency of vocational qualifications' and ad hoc conferences and seminars;
- thematic and dissemination networks;
- transfer mechanisms for innovation and good practice;
- interactive electronic cooperation through the Electronic Training Village.

Thematic priorities

9. In addition to providing information on vocational education and training generally, Cedefop has identified some thematic priorities which it will explore in more depth. Cedefop will focus its activities to promote research and development as well as its forums for debate and exchange on these priority themes, in the best interests of its partners.
10. Thematic priorities have been chosen by the Management Board both to consolidate and to develop work done under the medium-term priorities for 1997-2000. They reflect what Cedefop's partners regard as the central challenges for vocational education and training in the coming years.

These priorities will be refined to take account of important changes at EU level, in particular in the light of the implementation of the second Leonardo da Vinci programme and policies of the European Commission and Parliament.

11. Four priority themes are listed below broken down into specific issues relating to each theme. Work will focus on monitoring, analysing and disseminating information on each issue.

■ **Promoting competences and lifelong learning**

- the acquisition of core/key skills and the development of a learning platform for inclusion and empowerment;
- the development of open, flexible and linked learning pathways combining formal and non-formal learning (including the role of new technology in open and distance learning);
- new methods to validate/certify skills and competences, including those acquired through non-formal learning;
- provide support for the development of partnerships with and between the social partners to facilitate both access to lifelong learning and improvement in the training provided for the employed and unemployed;
- activate the role of vocational education and training institutions at all levels.

■ **Facilitating new ways of learning for a changing society**

- the transition from school to work and support for youngsters, including on-and-off-the-job training;
- the role of training in promoting social inclusion for disadvantaged groups and in assuring equality for men and women;
- identifying policies and best practices to raise the skill levels of older or lower-skilled workers to improve their employment prospects;
- improving the quality, content and design of training through new information technology and improved training of trainers.

■ **Supporting employment and competitiveness**

- ways in which investment in people is promoted;
- links between training and competitiveness including new occupations and future training needs on the labour market;
- training policies of the Member States in employment strategy, including agreements between the social partners at European, national, regional, sectoral and enterprise levels;
- the role of training in promoting entrepreneurship, self-employment, the social economy, innovation and the environment;
- promoting the adaptability of workers and companies on the labour market;
- supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

■ **Improving European understanding and transparency**

- ways to improve the transparency of vocational qualifications and removing obstacles to the recognition of diplomas;
- action for European mobility in vocational education and training to promote the acquisition of competences, especially for trainees and young people;
- the development of a European dimension in vocational guidance and preparing people for a European labour market and European citizenship.

Working methods

12. The director is in charge of implementing this decision and will regularly report to the Management Board on its implementation and on any difficulties that might prevent any of the provisions in this decision from being carried out.
13. Cedefop proposes to develop its working methods in the following ways in order to meet the priorities:
 - a shift away from small and relatively short-term projects towards larger-scale projects to be carried out over a longer period by teams;
 - changes in work organisation will be taken forward internally in consultation with the staff committee;
 - a balanced use of dissemination means in order to provide optimal service to stakeholders and target groups to meet requests for information, exploiting its potential to provide both access to structured information drawn from different vocational education and training databases and interactive 'virtual' communication;
 - introduce initiatives to raise the profile of Cedefop and the use of its services and publications;
 - separate reports on development in research and in policy will be prepared in alternate years. Cedefop's other activities will feed into the preparation of these reports;
 - the European Journal will become a central platform for presenting results of research stimulated by Cedefop and for obtaining scientific input from representatives of vocational training from policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners;
 - assist in analyses of statistical data and provide data support in close cooperation with Eurostat.

Resources

14. Concerning staff and financial resources:
 - the Management Board's decision of autumn 1998 on staff policy will be implemented and, on the basis of the annual work programme, individual descriptions of personnel tasks will be drawn up and resources allocated by activity;
 - subject to staff and financial resources being agreed, Cedefop will associate third countries. This will be done in cooperation with the European Training Foundation for countries from central and eastern Europe.

External evaluation

15. An external evaluation of Cedefop's internal management and its external impact will be finalised at the end of 2001. Targets in the medium-term priorities 1997-2000, guidelines and priorities 2000-03 and the annual work programmes will be the base for such an evaluation. The evaluation requires a clear distribution of tasks and indicators, and will be carried out under the auspices of the European Commission with the involvement of Management Board members.

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